The Great Indian Tradition of Mantras: Its Future in Scientific Thought

— Satya Vrat Shastri

The tradition of Mantras, holy incantations goes back to in India to a hoary past. They are met with in the Vedas where they are employed to invoke deities to seek their favour for progeny, animals, spiritual majesty material prosperity and long life. The deities were also invoked to destroy the enemies and the adversaries who may be harbouring evil intentions. The Mantras serve as the potent medium between the person seeking help and the deities to whom the prays.

Since the gods would not bestow the person wants unless they are pleased, prayers or hymns are recited in their praise. Sacrifices are performed where oblations are poured in the fire, the time-honoured rites have to be carried to invoke the respective deities who are to fulfil the wishes of the sacrificer. Since the sacrifices are to be performed according to well-defined rites to be effective in yielding the desired result, the help was solicited to procure the services of experts in the rites who would help in the performance of the sacrifice for the sacrificer, the Yajamana.

The Mantras were and, still are, considered to possess special powers. Their recitation, therefore had to be impeccable. It is not just a syllable or a letter but even the accent ~~had to be~~ the raising or the lowering the pitch had to be just perfect. Even a slight deviation could spell disaster.

The Mantras were used to cure even the diseases, ailments and increase longevity. The Atharvaveda, the last of the four Vedas, is particularly noteworthy in this connection. The hymns have called Bhaisajyani, increasing life-span. It also has been of the form of the black magic to speed the opponents against application of Ghoraprayoga from Vedas, the terrible and the wicked.

Bhaisajyani, bestowing the disease

The peculiar polarity of the Mantras was carried into the later Sanskrit literature as well. The sage Vishvamitra with his accomplice the young Rama ~~and Lakshmana~~ to his Ashrama to ward off the demons causing disturbances to his sacrifice, taught him the way the set of Mantras called Bala and Atibala, the two Vidyas as they are called, which he would not feel the tiredness of hunger and thirst

mantra grahaṇa (Yani balani atibalani tani

kṣut-pipāsa no tuṣṭi rāmaḥ kaḍeṣṭa kaḍeṣṭa.

In the Puranic epics and the Purāṇas, the Rākṣasas gave place to Asuras, the Daityas, the Dānavas, the Nāgas, the Yakṣas, the Gandharvas, the Vidyādharas, the Kinnaras and the Rākṣasas, as the fight went on for decades without victory for either side. Sage Agastya consulted Rama and told him to recite a hymn in praise of Sun-God, Āditya, by the name by which it is called in the Rāmāyaṇa mythology. And it is only after this that Rama obtained victory.

The Mantras are effective enough to overcome an enemy however powerful. The sages and the saints could do so long ago. Recently, in Spain, a great deputation of merit visited Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham.

Kāñcī-Śaṅkarācārya's reputation as a Mantra-vādin through King Bhoja who approached Sage Vasiṣṭha to know from him the reason why his island was not in safe anguished of him (with) his everything was well in his kingdom, he said with his (the sage's) Mantra, the Creator, the economic position should even become critical, his arrows know for their targets are almost getting reduced:

(visible)

tvan mantrādeva mantrāṇāṁ dhātrā pradhānatā vibho!
prāyaḥ śiṣṭāyantā iva dhyātā lakṣyabhedāya śarāḥ!!

In the Purāṇic period of Tantric texts the Mantras assumed the form of Bījākṣaras, the proto Sanskrit syllables like aiṁ, hrīṁ, krīṁ, viccaḥ etc., each having a particular potency. They also acquired secrecy. They had to be uttered silently, as it was just enough, to keep up their effectiveness. The latter implying that a learner would strictly ask him not to show it without last to lose its importance or they fall into hands of unclassified elements. The general disciple they are effective only if they are received from a Guru, Śrī Guru who invests them with spiritual potential. This form is people approach the Spiritual Guru, the Śādhus and Sannyāsins whom they accept as their Guru for imparting them some Mantra which may ward off evil and bring prosperity to them and their families. Incidentally, receiving the Mantra from a Guru is the guarantee of devotion and dedication to him. This is taken to be an initiation into discipleship of the Guru. There is very Guru and they are seen sometimes, at least a few occasions, to be asking prospective disciples or approaching them through their earlier disciples who act their agents motivating them by citing their examples, to receive initiation into discipleship of the particular Guru and receiving the Mantra from him which may be a simple

(themselves)

verse from the Bhagavadgita or the same from some Purana or a stanza from some stotra which since instruction not to share it with others.

Thus the Mantras have some miraculous powers has been felt personally by a number of people including mine when I was very young, I have developed jaundice. A person offered to cure him. He placed in a big water basin. After a sprinkling water on me with a branch of kusa grass, the sacred pouring water on me with big mugs muttering some Mantras. Slowly or suddenly poured water dripping down from body into the basin were yellow. Within an hour or so my jaundice had gone not to reappear all these decades.

Now, in view of personal experience and direct evidence of proof force potency of Mantras.

Thus I another personal experience and made bold to recount here. When I was doing PhD at Banaras, I developed a longing to visit Sarnath which is very close — a distance of about 10-12 km. I engaged a cycle rickshaw and were there. It was quite an unknown place with no one. By way of museum there was a big room housing some art artifacts recovered from around including the pillar with the lions which has now been adopted as national emblem. There pillar had the sacred wheel in stone monument. To have a closer look at it I put my right hand in the hollow little knowing that it had a big hive of highly black wasps. Within 20 seconds I felt a sting poisonous me so deep as to cause unbearable pain and swelling. My cries and shrieks attracted the attention of the rickshaw puller who came running to me. In frenzy my eyes he picked some dust from the ground, powered it on my affected and continued muttering something. Strangely all my pain and swelling had except the scars of several wasp sting. This was simply a miracle. It was localised to the but for miracle, the sting of such a big swarm of black wasps could have been fatal. The rickshaw puller, an unlettered elderly man in spite of pleadings with him did not reveal what were he had muttered. It is not to be revealed Sir, said he in all humility. The instruction of the Guru. Otherwise the power will go.

How is now one to explain all these things? Science [illegible] explain [illegible] it is impossible cause and effect relationship between the two phenomena. May just dismiss them as superstition

in underdeveloped or decadent societies. The Mantras are now fast fading out. For one, they have not been sung with tunes or even if sung, have not been continuously and unquestionably been recited or muttered.

As a fact some compilations of the Mantras therein like Mantra Mahodadhi or Shri Deo Chandrodhi where Mantras are listed with their elaborate ritual and an indication for application to most particular situations and the necessary explanation in Hindi or Sanskrit. A number of compendia are still in manuscript, including a few in which I propose to edit to get a minimum direct apt in conjunction.

As per the Puranic and Tantric system for a Mantra to yield the desired effect, the number of repetitions are also prescribed like one thousand ~~eight~~ times or hundred times and times or a thousand to seven times. For easy counting of the number of repetitions there is taken the rosary of beads which is generally of Rudraksha or occasionally of Tulasi or basil seeds. The rosary has 108 beads. The repetition going with each bead of coming up to the last, i.e. 108th one is taken to be one circle going by the name of Mala, one revolving circle counting for the number of Malas. & From one Mala to any number one may go on repeating depending upon one's stamina and persistence. Those desirous of quick result continue with repetition thrice a day hours to point or between morning and evening, ~~the~~ before sunrise and sunset in period called Sandhya which normally is reserved for prayers. Immediately after repetition, in japa is to be performed after ablution which ensures physical purity. But there is no bar even about it. One may compute in Japa even in the night or early hours. Certain rituals which can cause harm to an adversary are actually to be performed at weird places like a crematorium ground with the recitation after incantations on the dead of night. Those rituals may lead to such drastic results as killing, stambana, morana, killing and vocation.

The practice has developed of late to engage the help of Pandits, priests, or proxies who compute or administering of Mantras for people who cannot do it themselves on payment. Some feel difficulty in vouchsafing the efficacy of such a solution. But it is widely prevalent now.

In an age of scientific age people have started questioning the logic explanation behind non-observance of the prescribed rituals due to ignorance or negligence

Mantras have not yielded the fruit as desired by the seekers sowing seeds of doubt in their minds about the efficacy of them. Even the believers in them have started disassociating them as mere superstition not going well with the age in which we live now. The diseases and ailments not being treated now by the Mantras, People are taking recourse to modern medicine now. The charge-fee is so great now that the age-old system of Ayurveda treatment has taken a back seat with the rise of colleges, physicians giving Ayurvedic treatment with their herbal preparations is dwindling now, so dwindling that at some places they have become an endangered species now. Even lots of are seen, at least some of them, prescribing allopathic drugs clandestinely. The old technique of diagnosing the disease with unbelievable accuracy just by feeling the pulse which has given rise to legendary the legendary figures is almost a thing of the past. When this situation might be treated with herbal treatment, one can well imagine the situation of the medicines of the Mantras.

Though the situation is pretty disturbing, it is not totally out of control yet. There are people, dinsighted scientists who still believe in the efficacy of the Mantras, though their knowledge of them may be for to inadequate. So long as they exist, the belief in the efficacy of the would continue. The scientific onslaught is certainly severe but the Mantras would, hope fully enough, will withstand it.

ग्रन्थ श्लोक

विरचय्य] विरच्य] णिजन्त

√इदि अत्र प्रत्ययात्

सन्

मान्या जम्मूराज्य मन्त्रिणः महाभागाः,
मान्या जम्मू विश्वविद्यालय कुलपतयः श्रीमन्तो ऽभिलाषमट्टमहाभागाः,
मान्या अखिलभारतीय प्राच्यविद्यासम्मेलनाध्यक्षा आचार्य राजेन्द्र मिश्रमहाभागाः
मान्या अखिलभारतीय प्राच्यविद्यासम्मेलनाध्यक्षा आचार्य सती रामा
महाभागाः सम्मेलनविविधसत्राध्यक्षाः कार्यकारिणीसदस्या विद्वद्वरेण्याः
गरिष्ठा ज्येष्ठाः श्रेष्ठाः कनिष्ठाश्च,

श्रीरामायणीयेषु पद्येषु सम्प्रत्यामाणकतां गतेऽस्मिन्नस्ति
संयोगा वियोगश्च यद्यत्रतरां सङ्गच्छते —
यथा काष्ठं च काष्ठं च समेयातां महार्णवे।
समेत्य च व्यपेयातां तद्वद्भूतसमागमाः॥

दिनद्वयात्पूर्वमिव वयमत्र समवेताः। किमाश्चर्यमुल्लासप्रासादस्मदीयं मनसि। परस्परसन्दर्शनेन, सम्भाषणेन, योगक्षेमादेपरिप्रश्नेन च परिहृष्टं निर्वृतिं च वयमानन्दामः। सम्प्रति समुपैति वियोगकालः। यथा संयोगेनकुतश्चन्तो ऽस्तथा वियोगेन दुःखम्। परि कदा पुनरन्योन्यं द्रक्ष्यामः, शक्नुमाम, शक्नुमाम वा न वेत्ति कोऽपि।

अत्र दिनत्रये ऽस्माभिः प्राच्यविद्याविषयिकी चर्चा प्रवर्तिता। परदशाला निबन्धा वाचिताः। कश्चाविमृष्टपूर्वो नाम विषयश्चाविमर्शपदवीमापादिताः। स्वकीयमनोपनाथपूर्वकमत्रोपस्थितानां मूर्धाभिषिक्तानामभिमतं मतं तादृशमेव श्रुतम्। तस्य सूर्यस्य प्रकाशेन बहुश्रुतत्वमात्मन्यापादितं सा रक्षिता चात्मनः कृतकृत्यता। तां कृतकृत्यतामनुभवन्तो वयमिताः परावर्तामहे। पुनरस्य वासरस्य समागमं प्रतिहृदयेन कामयमानाः।

सम्प्रति संस्कृतानभिज्ञानां बहूनामत्र समुपस्थितानां सुखावबोधाय प्राञ्जलीं वाचमाश्रित्य किञ्चिद्ब्रवीमि —

Hon'ble Shri Chain Singh Chandak, Minister of Jammu & Kashmir State, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Amitabha Mattoo, Vice-Chancellor University of Jammu, The General President of AIOC Prof. Rajendra Mishra, The Vice President of AIOC Prof. Satish Jha, The Local Secretary of AIOC Prof. Ramakanta Jadoli, The members of Service-Faculty of Univ. of Jammu, The members of Executive of AIOC and Fellow Delegates,

ग्रन्थ श्लोक

विरचय्य] विरच्य] णिजन्त

√इदि अत्र प्रत्ययात्

सन्

मान्या जम्मूराज्य मन्त्रिणः महाभागाः,
मान्या जम्मू विश्वविद्यालय कुलपतयः श्रीमन्तो डा. मिलाप भट्ट महाभागाः,
मान्या अखिलभारतीय प्राच्यविद्या सम्मेलनाध्यक्षा आचार्य राजेन्द्र मिश्र महाभागाः
मान्या अखिलभारतीय प्राच्यविद्या सम्मेलनाध्यक्षा आचार्य सती रामा महाभागाः सम्मेलनविविधसत्राध्यक्षाः कार्यकारिणीसदस्या विद्वद्वरेण्याः
गरिष्ठा ज्येष्ठाः श्रेष्ठाः कनिष्ठाश्च,

श्रीरामायणीयेषु पद्येषु सम्प्रत्यामाणकतां गतेष्वेकमस्ति
संयोगा वियोगश्च यद्वत्सुतरां सङ्गच्छते —
यथा काष्ठं च काष्ठं च समेयातां महार्णवे।
समेत्य च व्यपेयातां तद्वत्सङ्गमागताः॥

दिनद्वयात्पूर्वमिव वयमत्र समवेताः। किमाश्चर्यं उल्लासः प्रासीदस्माकं मनसि। परस्परसन्दर्शनेन, सम्भाषणेन, योगक्षेमादेपरिप्रश्नेन च परिहृष्टं निर्वृतं च मे मनः। सम्प्रति समुपैति वियोगकालः। यथा संयोगस्तथा वियोगेन दुःखम्। परि कदा पुनरन्योन्यं द्रक्ष्यामः, शक्नुयाम, शक्नुयाम वा न वेत्ति कोऽपि।

अस्य दिनत्रये ऽस्माभिः प्राच्यविद्याविषयिणी चर्चा प्रवर्तिता। परदशाला निबन्धा वाचिताः। कलाविमृष्टपूर्वा नाना विषयाः विमर्शपदवीमापादिताः। स्वकीयमतोपन्यासपूर्वकमन्येषां मतानां मूलविधानाभिमतं मतं तारतम्येन श्रुतम्। तस्य सर्वस्य श्रवणेन बहुश्रुतत्वमात्मन्यापादितं सा रक्षिता चात्मनः कृतकृत्यता। तां कृतकृत्यतामनुभवन्तो वयमिताः परावर्तामहे पुनरस्य त्वरितं समागमं प्रतिहृदयेन कामयमानाः।

सम्प्रति संस्कृतानभिज्ञानां बहूनामत्र समुपस्थितानां सुखावबोधाय प्राञ्जलीं वाचमाश्रित्य किञ्चिद्ब्रवीमि —

Hon'ble Shri Chain Singh Chanak, Minister of Jammu & Kashmir State Govt., Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Amitabha Mattoo, Vice-Chancellor, University of Jammu
The General President of AIOC Prof. Rajendra Mishra,
The Vice President of AIOC Prof. Satish Jha,
The Local Secretary of AIOC Prof. Ramakanta Jadoli,
The members of Service-Faculty of Univ. of Jammu,
The members of Executive of AIOC and Fellow Delegates,

मा. या. कुलपति महामना